

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

VLR-10/16/73 NRHP-1/21/74

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| STATE: | Virginia |
| COUNTY: | Alleghany |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY DATE | |

1. NAME: Sweet Chalybeate Springs
LAND OF HISTORIC:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|
| 2. LOCATION | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | | | |
| West side of Route 311 | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: | | CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: | |
| Sweet Chalybeate | | Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler) | |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| Virginia | 51 | Alleghany | 005 |

| CATEGORY (Check One) | | OWNERSHIP | | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Public | Public Acquisition: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied | Yes: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> In Process | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Both | | <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted |
| | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | | |

| | | |
|----------------------|----------|------|
| 1. OWNER OF PROPERTY | | |
| OWNER'S NAME: | | |
| Multiple ownership | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE |
| Sweet Chalvbeate | Virginia | 51 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| B. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION | | | Allegheny |
| COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: | | | |
| Allegheny County Court House | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: | STATE | CODE | |
| Covington | Virginia | 51 | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|
| G. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS | | | |
| TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory | | | |
| DATE OF SURVEY: 1958 | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> State |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> County | <input type="checkbox"/> Local |
| DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Washington | | STATE: D. C. | CODE: 11 |

| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| STATE: Virginia | COUNTRY: Alleghany |

SECRET

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The resort hotel complex at Sweet Chalybeate Springs dates from the 1850's and is typical of Virginia spa architecture having a main building, guest ranges, and cottages all fronted with two level galleries. Set on Sweet Springs Creek below Peters Mountain with the Alleghany forming a backdrop, Sweet Chalybeate retains the outlines of its former park. At one end of a thousand foot lawn are the springs flowing undisturbed from the bottom of a small rock bluff. Nearby to the north are the bathing pools with the adjacent foundations of the original bath houses, and the present modern bath house. The long lawn, once dotted with rows of magnificent trees, is now a pasture stretching from the springs at the south to the main building at the north end; the ranges are to the west of the lawn, the state highway to the east. "Bachelors' Row" sits across the highway from the main building.

The main building is a gable roof, weatherboarded, frame structure twelve bays long and two bays wide. The gable end fronts east on State Route 311, and the long side looks south over the lawn to the springs. On the south, east and north double-tiered galleries rise on brick piers above the brick English basement. The galleries have slender Greek Doric columns and a delicate Chinese balustrade. Doors and windows are surrounded by a simple molded trim. Wooden double hung windows have nine-over-six sash. A breezeway occupies the seventh bay of the building; the single-run open string stair ascends in the breezeway.

In the basement the original bar-room occupies the east end of the building, and on the first floor the reading room occupies the east fourth of the structure. The remaining area is divided into individual sleeping rooms. The reading room features two simple mantels with plain shelves, friezes and pilasters, and a fine curvilinear grill over the reception desk. The room has been used in recent years as a country store. The individual sleeping rooms in this building all have fireplaces with typical Greek mantels with plain pilasters, pentagonal friezes and plain shelves. Just north of the main building stands a many gabled summer house, supported by slender posts.

The north range of sleeping rooms originally stretched south from a western wing of the main building. This wing has now disappeared as have the northern-most bays. The six most northerly bays of the existing range are badly deteriorated, but retain the characteristic double-tiered gallery supported by rectangularly paneled piers. A breezeway with a stair is located near the center of this building. The remaining portion of the single-pile building is utilized as a multiple family dwelling. The double-tiered gallery is present, supported by paneled piers on the first level and posts with a simple balustrade featuring rectangular balusters on the second level. Doors and windows have a plain architrave trim. The windows have six-over-six sash. Breezeways with single run stairs provide access to the upper floor.

The north range is separated from the south range by two square, frame, weatherboarded cottages with pyramidal roofs. The northern cottage has a central quatrefoil "Gothic" chimney, but the original chimney on the southern cottage has been replaced by a square brick stack. The cottages are surrounded on the south, east and north by galleries supported by slender Greek Doric columns.

The south range is a gable roofed single-pile frame, weatherboarded structure. The double-tiered gallery is supported by slender Greek Doric

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | |
|------------------|------|
| STATE | |
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY | |
| Alleghany | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | |

(Number all entries)

7.

columns. Windows and doors are surrounded by architrave trim. Transoms are above the doors, and the windows have six-over-six sash.

At the location of the springs and bathing pools, there are several buildings. Immediately west of the pools is a modern board-and-batten bath house reconstructed from earlier materials. To the west on the rise above the pools is a board-and-batten gable roofed building with brick ends which have been extensively repointed. Just west of this building is a log cabin. Both of these structures probably originally served as servants quarters. The original circular bandstand with a dome roof which stood on the knoll near the main building has been moved in recent years to stand on the rise south of the pools.

The range known as "Bachelors' Row", which was removed from the main section of the resort due to the sometimes rowdy good spirits of the bachelors, is on the hill across the highway east of the main building. A one-story, ell-shaped building, this range also exhibits the gallery which is the distinguishing feature of all the Sweet Chalybeate buildings.

GPH

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | <u>history</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>recreation</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Sweet Chalybeate Springs is a relic of the nineteenth-century days when the fashionable world of North and South came to the springs of Virginia to "take the waters and play the marriage market" as well as to escape the torpid heat of the lowlands. A remarkable number of the wooden pavilions and cottages remain at Sweet Chalybeate to attest to the relative size and popularity of the resort and to give an unusually undisturbed picture of a nineteenth century Virginia spa. The springs, themselves, continue to flow freely from the limestone bluff and form pools among the foundation of the original bath houses.

Although the springs were probably known and used by settlers in the eighteenth century, Sweet Chalybeate did not begin as a commercially operated resort until 1836 when Philip Rogers and others incorporated the Red Spring Company. Called the Red Sweet by the nineteenth century springs-goers, these springs quickly began to receive the overflow from the nearby White Sulphur Springs and Sweet Springs, and became popular.

About 1845 the property was acquired by John R. Sampson who made improvements over the next several years. In 1850 Mr. C. Bias purchased the Red Sweet for 40,000 dollars and transformed the establishment into one of the more fashionable spas. One of the guests described the change, "everything is fresh and new and cozy; a neat white frame hotel, and tasteful cottages (sic)". Another visitor called the Red Sweet "much the sweetest and most agreeable place." Among the attractions provided by Mr. Bias were separate pools for ladies and gentlemen supplied with over a million gallons of chalybeate water a day, a particularly fine dining room and a reading room with newspapers -- the only one of its kind in the mountains. The waters remained the chief attraction, however. They were considered the strongest carbonated mineral water in America and a certain cure for sterility. Although the Red Sweet never became as popular as the White Sulphur or the Rockbridge Alum, it was one of the preferred stops of the South Carolinians.

By the turn of the century, the Red Sweet was commonly called the Sweet Chalybeate Springs though it occasionally had been known as Sweet Chalybeate during the nineteenth century. The heyday of all the springs was ending, however, and the Sweet Chalybeate suffered decline and finally closed its doors in 1918. Since then, the tract has had multiple owners. Some of the porticoed rows and cottages have served as residences and for many years the main building housed a country store. Today the pools are sometimes open for swimming, and the springs are available to local residents who still "take the waters."

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1835-36, Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, Printers to the Commonwealth, 1836.
 John J. Moorman, M.D., The Virginia Springs, Richmond; J. W. Randolph, 1855.
 Oren F. Morton, A Centennial History of Alleghany County, Virginia, Dayton, Va.; J. K. Ruebush Co., 1923. (reprinted, Bridgewater; G. J. Carrur W., 1970).
 Perceval Reniers, The Springs of Virginia, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|---|---|----|---|----------------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| NW | Degrees Minutes Seconds 37 ° 38 ' 44 " | Degrees Minutes Seconds 80 ° 14 ' 29 " | | Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' " | Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' " | |
| NE | 37 ° 38 ' 44 " | 80 ° 14 ' 14 " | | | | |
| SE | 37 ° 38 ' 29 " | 80 ° 14 ' 14 " | | | | |
| SW | 37 ° 38 ' 29 " | 80 ° 14 ' 29 " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 18 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

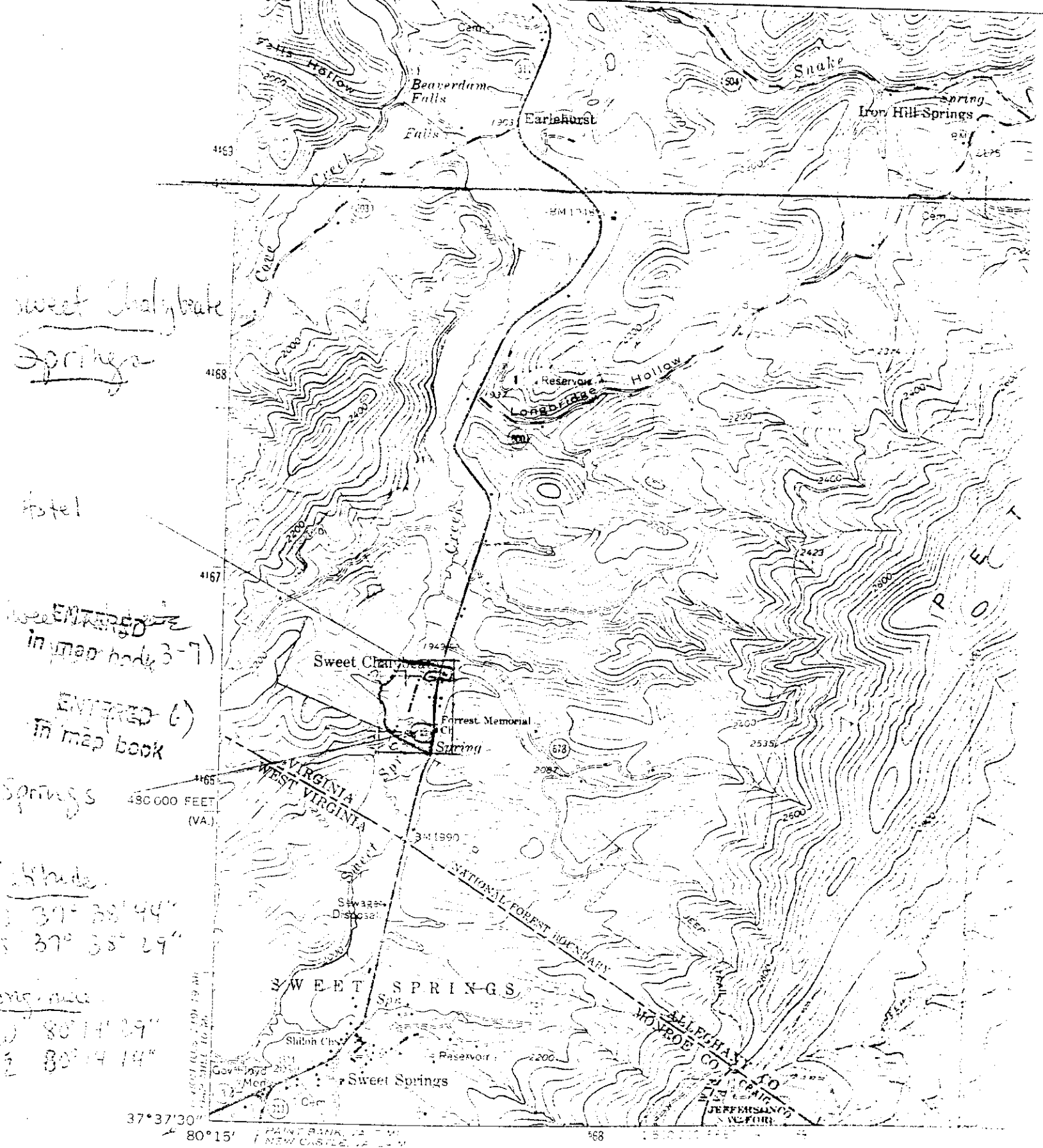
| | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| NAME AND TITLE: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff | | DATE October, 1973 |
| ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Richmond | STATE Virginia | CODE 51 |

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.</u> Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Title _____</p> <p>Date <u>OCT 16 1973</u></p> | <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p> |
|--|--|

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USCGS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone,
and West Virginia coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17,
shown in blue